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The Postage Stamps of Siam

2237.167

THE POSTAGE STAMPS OF SIAM

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ISSUES OF 1889-1900

2237.167

BY

ALEX. HOLLAND

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FOREWORD.

Siam has long been a popular country with collectors on account of the interest attached to its issues and the philatelically clean record of its Postal Department. It has also long needed an authoritative and comprehensive presentation of these issues, which require to be studied carefully and intelligently. The BOSTON PHILATELIC SOCIETY *has, therefore, much satisfaction in presenting the following monograph to the notice of Philatelists.*

The study was made principally from Mr. Holland's magnificent collection of Siam, the essay being submitted in the Prize Competition at the meeting of January 19, 1904, when it was awarded the silver medal.

We are enabled to fully illustrate the text through the courtesy of the Scott Stamp and Coin Co., who have kindly loaned the cuts.

C. A. HOWES,

Secretary.

Boston, September, 1904.

The Postage Stamps of Siam

With special reference to the Issues of 1889-1900

SIAM occupies the central portion of the Indo-China peninsula, its greatest length from north to south being 1,200 miles and greatest breadth from east to west 400 miles. Upper Burmah and that part of Laos once Siamese form the northern boundary; to the west, Upper Burmah and the long finger of Lower Burmah intervene between Siam and the sea; while to the east lies French Indo-China, the only coast line being that to the south on the Gulf of Siam.

Within the past ten years Siam has surrendered, under pressure from European powers, at least one-third of her territory. The area is now about 200,000 square miles, or a little more that the combined areas of Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. With the loss of territory there has ensued a corresponding loss of population; the latest estimate credits Siam with about five million inhabitants, a little more than the state of Illinois.

The executive power rests with a King who possesses the right to name his successor. He is advised by a Sana-

bodi or Cabinet, the positions in which are held, with few exceptions, by the King's half-brothers.

The legal monetary unit is the *tical*, a silver coin weighing 236 grains Troy, 980 fine. The legal value of the tical is fixed at sixty cents Mexican, being equivalent to about twenty-seven cents American money.

The first stamps issued by Siam, consisting of a set of five values, appeared in July 1883; the values and colors are given below. They are perforated 15, although the 1 lotte, blue, comes imperforate on all sides, imperforate horizontally, and also perforated on the top and sides, the bottom being imperforate.

1883. Perf. 15.

1. 1 lotte, blue (*shades*).
   - *a.* Imperf.
   - *b.* Imperf. horizontally.
   - *c.* Imperf. at bottom only.
2. 1 att, carmine (*shades*).
3. 1 pynung, vermilion "
4. 1 songpy, yellow "
5. 1 salung, orange "

There is quite a difference in the measurements of the lower values of this issue, the horizontal measurement ranging from 20mm. to 21mm., and the vertical from 25mm. to 26mm. Some consider there were two plates or dies, but most authorities are of the opinion that this difference is due simply to the shrinkage of the paper.

In 1885 a stamp valued at 1 tical became necessary and they produced this by surcharging the 1 lotte, blue, with four distinct types consisting of the figure "1" followed by the word "tical" printed in red at the top of the stamp. The authorities themselves find it a very difficult matter to differentiate between the originals and counterfeits, there being a large number of the latter. The most common counterfeit is the one distributed by a German, on which the word "tical" is spelled with an "e" instead of an "a"; another one is a counterfeit of the first type, in which all the letters of "tical" are large capitals, the counterfeit measuring 16½mm. from the left end of the base of the figure "1" to the right end of the base of the letter "L," while the original measures only 14mm., and the letters are much thinner and higher.

Those stamps having a surcharge that appears to be printed with a glacé or varnishy looking ink are generally regarded as forgeries.

A variety of type IV in which the figure is taller and without serif is found, and also one of type III with the

figure inverted; this type is likewise known with double surcharge in red, and with one in red and one in black.

1885. Perf. 15. Red surcharge.

1 TICAL	1 Tical	1 Tical	1 Tical
I	II	III	IV

6. 1 TICAL on 1 lotte, blue. Type I.
7. 1 Tical on 1 lotte, blue. Type II.
8. 1 Tical on 1 lotte, blue. Type III.
   - *a.* Surcharge inverted.
   - *b.* Surcharge double (both red).
   - *c.* Surcharge double (one black and one red).
   - *d.* Figure "1" inverted.
9. 1 Tical on 1 lotte, blue. Type IV.
   - *a.* Surcharge double.
   - *b.* Figure "1" without serif.

A new design was adopted in April 1887, and a new series consisting of seven values was issued on paper watermarked with a "chakr" and perforated 14. The "chakr" or "wheel," erroneously called a "lotus flower" in the catalogues, is symbolic of a mythological circular weapon which, when thrown, was supposed to return to the thrower in the manner of a boomerang.

1887. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr."

10. 2 atts, green and carmine (*shades*).
11. 3 atts, green and blue "
12. 4 atts, green and brown "
13. 8 atts, green and yellow "
14. 12 atts, lilac and carmine "
15. 24 atts, lilac and blue "
16. 64 atts, lilac and brown "

There are no varieties of this issue.

In 1889 a stamp valued at 1 att became necessary, and to obtain it they surcharged in Siamese characters the 1 pynung of the 1883 issue. This surcharge appears at the top of the stamp in black; it can also be found in a pair, one of which lacks the surcharge.

1889. Perf. 15. Black surcharge.

17. 1 att on 1 pynung, vermilion (*shades*).
    a. Pair, one without surcharge.

About this time Siam began to use the printing press with increasing regularity for the surcharging of new

values. In 1889 the 2 atts, green and carmine, was surcharged with a new value, 1 att, in four distinct types, the value being in Siamese characters together with the Arabic figure "1."

In type I the Arabic figure is 5mm. high and is thinner than in type III, which is the same height and has a straight horizontal serif. In type II the "1" is 6mm. high. Type II is also surcharged on the 3 atts, green and blue. Most of the stamps of this issue can be found with the control mark of Prince Prisdang on the back in red, and the surcharges come in various ways, inverted, double, etc., as in the appended list. The earliest surcharge had the thin figure "1"; the two thick figures came later and appeared co-incidentally.

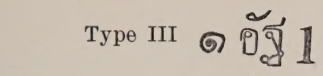
1889. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.

Type I ๑ อัฐ 1

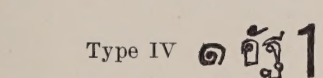
18. 1 att on 2 atts, green and carmine (*shades*).

Type II ๑ อัฐ 1

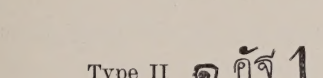
19. 1 att on 2 atts, green and carmine (*shades*).
   a. First Siamese character inverted.
   b. Double surcharge.
   c. Serif of figure 1 turned up at end.
   d. Pair, one without surcharge.
   e. Figure 1 omitted.

Type III 

20. 1 att on 2 atts, green and carmine (*shades*).

Type IV 

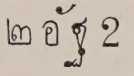
21. 1 att on 2 atts, green and carmine (*shades*).

Type II 

22. 1 att on 3 atts, green and blue (*shades*).
    a. Thick figure 1.

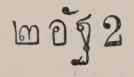
This last variety can be found in a pair, the other one of which is the regular surcharge.

In the latter part of 1890 the 3 atts of the 1887 issue was surcharged 2 atts in five varieties. Black surcharge.



Type I. Surcharge measures 16mm.

23. 2 atts on 3 atts, green and blue.



Type II. Surcharge measures 14½mm.

24. 2 atts on 3 atts, green and blue.
    a. The 2 is vertically flattened at the right.
    b. Accent over Siamese characters horizontal.

๓ อัฐ 2

Type III. Small 2.

25. 2 atts on 3 atts, green and blue.

๓ อัฐ 2

Type IV. First Siamese character not on a level with following characters.

26. 2 atts on 3 atts, green and blue.

๓ อัฐ 2

Type V. First and second Siamese characters on the same level.

27. 2 atts on 3 atts, green and blue.

This last surcharge also comes overprinted on the 1 att on 3 atts, green and blue, of the 1889 issue. (No. 22).

Type V.

28. 2 atts on 1 att on 3 atts, green and blue.

In 1891 a new value of the same type and paper as the 1887 issue appeared printed in one color.

1891. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr."

29. 1 att, green (*shades*).

In 1893 Siam issued a Provisional 4 atts stamp. The surcharge appears in four varieties on the 24 atts, lilac and blue, of the 1887 issue, and is given in full, both in English and in Siamese.

The first two types are identical, except that one lacks a period which is furnished the other; and the same is true of types III and IV. There is a difference in the spacing between the English and Siamese surcharges; a space between the "t's" of "atts" is found; also inverted "s," antique "a," etc.

1893. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.

Type I **4 atts**

30. 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.
   a. Double Siamese surcharge.
   b. Siamese surcharge omitted.
   c. English surcharge omitted.
   d. Inverted "s" in "atts."
   e. Antique "a" in "atts."
   f. Antique "a" and space between the "t's" in "atts."
   g. "t" and "s" of "atts" dropped below the line.
   h. Siamese surcharge inverted.

Type II **4 atts.**

31. 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.
   a. Inverted "s" in "atts."
   b. Siamese surcharge double.
   c. English surcharge omitted.
   d. Same as *c*, Siamese surcharge double.
   e. Period omitted.

Type III **4 atts**

32. 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.
    a. Siamese surcharge omitted.
    b. Double Siamese surcharge.
    c. Space between the "t's" of "atts."
    d. Pair, one being surcharged in Siamese only.

Type IV **4 atts.**

33. 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.
    a. English surcharge double.
    b. Siamese surcharge double.
    c. Inverted "s" in "atts."
    d. Pair, one being surcharged in Siamese only.

The surcharging of this issue seems to have been done in a more or less haphazard way, there being no connection between the Siamese and English surcharges. From my examination of the stamps of this issue, I am of the opinion that the surcharging of the Siamese characters was done independently of the English surcharge. This I think is borne out by the finding of only one kind of surcharge double, the other being normal on the same stamp; also by the fact that the distance between the two surcharges varies from 2mm. to 15mm., and I have pairs and blocks showing different measurements on each stamp.

In type I the following measurements between the surcharges, viz.: 10, 12, 13 and 15mm., can be found in combination with the inverted "s," the double Siamese, the

ENTIRE SHEET OF THE PROISIONAL 2 ATTS OF 1894

SHOWING THE ARRANGEMENT OF THE SIX VARIETIES

antique "a," the antique "a" and the spaced "t's," the antique "a" and the double Siamese. As these measurements vary so much, it would be useless to attempt to make a list of those which could exist.

In type II there are also different measurements to be found. In order to tell the difference between type I, normal, and type II*e*, it is necessary to study the last Siamese character in the surcharge; it will be found to differ in the normal varieties of the two types and is easily distinguishable.

Type III also varies a great deal in the measurements between the English and Siamese surcharges. The same may also be said of type IV, although in this case the Siamese surcharges are identical and do not differ as in types I and II.

The issue of 1894 consists of 1 Atts, 1 Att and 2 Atts surcharged on 64 atts, lilac and brown, of the 1887 issue.

1894. Black surcharge in English and Siamese characters.

Type I **1** Atts.

34. 1 Atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
    a. "s" of "Atts" inverted.
    b. Period inverted.
    c. Surcharge inverted.
    d. Different space between "1" and "A" of "Atts."

Type II **1 Att.**

35. 1 Att on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
   a. English surcharge double.
   b. Different space between "1" and "A" of "Att."
   c. Narrow "A."
   d. Inverted "V" for "A."
   e. Period inverted.

Type III 1 Att.

36. 1 Att on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
   a. Different space between "1" and "A" of "Atts."
   b. Inverted "V" for "A."
   c. Siamese surcharge omitted.
   d. Surcharged on back as well as front.
   e. Surcharge on back inverted.
   f. Pair, surcharges on back *tête-bêche.*

The 2 atts of this issue, the "Atts" being of the same type as the last 1 att described (No. 36), is found in the following varieties:

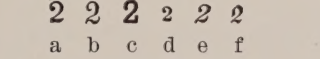
Type IV 2 Atts.

37. 2 Atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
   a. "s" of "Atts" omitted.
   b. Both surcharges inverted.
   c. Double surcharge.
   d. Double surcharge, one inverted.
   e. "s" of "Atts" inverted.
   f. Surcharged on back as well as front.
   g. Same as *f*, surcharge on back has inverted "s."
   h. Surcharge on back inverted.
   i. Pair, one without surcharge on back.
   j. Pair, surcharges on back *tête-bêche.*

The setting of types I and II, with the exception of the "s" of "Atts," seems to be identical; and the setting of types III and IV is identical, with, of course, the exception of the Arabic and Siamese numerals. The difference between these two styles of setting is in the finer and narrower type employed in the second setting for the word Att or Atts, the "A" in particular being very much narrower at the base.

In this issue there seems to be no variation in measurement between the surcharges, but the distance between the numeral and the word Att or Atts varies from ¼mm. to 6mm. for all types. Stamps of this issue can also be found with the control mark of Prince Prisdang on the back in red.

Co-incidentally with the appearance of the above types there was issued a stamp valued at 2 atts, surcharged on 64 atts, which comes with six different types of the figure 2, all appearing on one sheet and arranged as follows:



a b c d e f

a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	e	b	f
c	c	c	c	c	c	c	c	a	a	a	a
e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
e	e	e	e	e	a	f	f	f	f	f	f
f	f	f	f	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d
d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d	d

(*See half-tone plate.*)

Types (see below): V=a, VI=b, VII=c, VIII=d, IX=e, X=f.

2 Atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown.

38. Type V.

a. Inverted "s" in "Atts."
b. English surcharge double.
c. Inverted period.
d. Inverted "V" for "A."

39. Type VI.

40. Type VII.

a. Period half way up.
b. "s" of "Atts" inverted.
c. Period between "t" and "s" of "Atts."

41. Type VIII.

a. Period between "t" and "s" of "Atts."

42. Type IX.

a. Inverted "V" for "A"
b. Double English surcharge.

43. Type X.

Type V (a) appears 38 times on the sheet.
" VI (b) " once " " "
" VII (c) " 8 times " " "
" VIII (d) " 44 " " " "
" IX (e) " 18 " " " "
" X (f) " 11 " " " "

There appear to have been at least two printings of this setting.

In 1895 a new value was added, 10 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue, with English and Siamese surcharges. There are comparatively few varieties of this issue, which are given below.

1895. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.

10 Atts.

44. 10 Atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.
    a. "0" of "10" dropped below the line.
    b. Inverted "s" in "Atts."
    c. Surcharged on back as well as front.

In 1896 appeared a new type of surcharge for the 4 atts, this time on the 12 atts, lilac and carmine. From that time on the whole surcharge (English and Siamese) seems to have been set up at once for the full sheet, so there are no further variations in the measurements between these two surcharges, except those which occur on the same stamp in every sheet. There also appear to have been at least two different settings of these surcharges.

1896. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.

4 Atts.

Type I

ราคา ๔ อัฐ

45. 4 Atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    a. "s" of "Atts" inverted.

4 Atts.

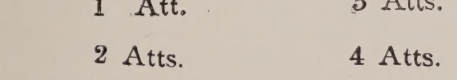
Type II

ราคา ๔ อัฐ

46. 4 Atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    a. No period after "Atts."
    b. Both surcharges double.
    c. Variety *a* double.

In 1898 another issue appeared consisting of 1, 3 and 4 atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine; 2 atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown; and 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue. The type in the English portion of these surcharges varies in the "A" and "t" from those of former issues in the following points: the majority of the "A's" are broader at the base, and all the "t's," with the exception of a few that slipped in, are without the up-stroke from the base of the letter.

1898. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.



47. 1 Att on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    - *a.* "Atts" in plural.
    - *b.* Inverted "V" for "A."
    - *c.* Narrow "A."
    - *d.* Both styles of "t."
    - *e.* Varieties *c* and *d* together.

48. 2 Atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
    - *a.* Narrow "A" in "Atts."
    - *b.* Both styles of "t."
    - *c.* Variety *a* with both "t's" old type.

49. 3 Atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    - *a.* Surcharge double.
    - *b.* Narrow "A" in "Atts."
    - *c.* Both styles of "t."
    - *d.* Variety *c* double.
    - *e.* Siamese figure of value below the line.

50. 4 Atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    a. Surcharge double.
    b. Both styles of "t."
    c. "A" double.
    d. Comma instead of period.
    e. Narrow "A."

51. 4 Atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue.

From the observations that I have been able to make, I am satisfied that there are two settings of the 3 atts on 12 atts, lilac and carmine, the difference being that the spacing between the figure 3 and the word Atts is much wider in one than in the other.

The 4 atts on 24 atts, lilac and blue, is very scarce and I have been unable to find any differences in the few specimens I have seen.

In 1899 a new setting for the 1 and 2 atts was made, the "A's" being narrow on the right half of the sheet and broad on the left half. The "t's" were all of the first type, with the up-stroke, and the figures were quite a distance from the word Att or Atts; the spacing of the word Att or Atts also was considerably greater than in the previous issue.

1899. Perf. 14. Watermarked a "chakr." Black surcharge.

1 Att.

52. 1 Att on 12 atts, lilac and carmine.
    a. Broad "A."
    b. Figure "1" inverted.
    c. Last "t" of "Att" inverted.
    d. Last "t" of "Att" broken off at the base.
    e. Inverted "V" for "A."

53. 1 Att on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
    a. Inverted "V" for "A."

2 Atts.

54. 2 Atts on 64 atts, lilac and brown.
    a. Broad "A."
    b. Error, "1 Atts."

The position occupied by the inverted "t" in the 1 att is in the top row, three stamps to the right of the middle of the sheet; and the inverted "1" is the first stamp to the right of the middle of the sheet in the third row from the top. The error of the 2 atts occurs just to the right of the middle of the sheet, on the top row. The figure 2 is also narrower on the right half of the sheet.

In 1900 a new design was adopted and a new issue appeared consisting of nine values; there are no varieties of this issue and the values and colors will be found below.

1900. Perf. 14. Unwatermarked.

55. 1 att, green (*shades*).
56. 2 atts, yellow-green "
57. 3 " red and blue "
58. 4 " carmine "
59. 8 " green and orange "
60. 10 " blue "
61. 12 " brown and carmine "
62. 24 " brown and blue "
63. 64 " brown and orange brown "

Prior to the appearance of this issue a die was approved, plates made from it and stamps printed from these plates, after which, however, the type was rejected; but three values were inadverently sent to some post offices and put on sale. They were in use a very short time and are comparatively scarce.

1900. Rejected die. Perf. 14. Unwatermarked.

64. 1 att, green.
65. 2 atts, green and red.
66. 3 atts, red and blue.

In 1903, on account of the depreciation in silver, which had lowered the value of the tical considerably since the foreign rate of postage was fixed at 10 atts (5 cents gold),

a change was made in some of the values and the foreign rate was raised to 14 atts. This made the 3 att stamp the equivalent of 1 cent gold, and to obtain its proper green color it changed with the 2 atts. The 2 cent gold rate had therefore to be represented by a new value, 6 atts, which took the carmine of the former 4 atts, leaving to the latter the colors of the discarded 12 atts. The double foreign rate is represented by another new value, 28 atts, which takes the colors of the discarded 24 att stamp. The new stamps made their appearance early this year.

1904. Perf. 14. Unwatermarked.

67. 2 atts, red and blue.
68. 3 " green.
69. 4 " brown and carmine.
70. 6 " carmine.
71. 14 " blue.
72. 28 " brown and blue.

On account of the Asiatic qualities of the Siamese people, it has been a very difficult matter to get any very definite information as to the surcharging of the various issues of this country, but it would seem, on account of the various fonts used throughout the time that these stamps were surcharged, that they were a little "shy" of type. So far as I have been able to ascertain there is not, with the exception of the 1 att on 1 pynung of 1889, a surcharged sheet of stamps that does not show variations of some sort or another all the way through.

From my observations I am led to believe that, almost without exception, there was more than one setting of every surcharge, especially those from 1893 on. In almost every issue the Siamese character representing the figure of value will be found either above or below the line of the other characters; this is quite prominent in the 2 atts on 3 atts of the 1890 issue, the 4 atts on 12 atts of the 1896 issue, and the 3 atts on 12 atts of the 1898 issue. On account of the poor quality of type used there are a great many minor differences in almost every issue, and the combinations of some of these, especially on the 4 atts on 24 atts of the 1893 issue, are almost countless. There is hardly an issue with English surcharge that does not show an inverted "s," the two types of the "a," both small and capital, and the two types of the "t." This makes it rather hard to properly differentiate at all times between the various settings, this being particularly true in the case of the 4 atts on 12 atts of the 1896 and 1898 issues.

Although I have not included in this article the postage stamps of the Straits Settlements surcharged with a "B" for use in Bangkok, nevertheless I believe they should be so included, for they were used to prepay packages of letters coming from the country districts to Bangkok for foreign countries, and were carried from Bangkok by the Royal Mail Steamers. The revenue thus derived, however, went to the British Colonial Government and not to the Siamese Government.

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